

CHIEF BRAVE HEART

of the Woodside Tribe

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By E. Manchester Boddy



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CHIEF BRAVE HEART



QUICKLY HE SIGHTED ALONG THE ARROW
(Page 65)

CHIEF BRAVE HEART

OF THE

WOODSIDE TRIBE

lias
BY

E. MANCHESTER BODDY

JERRY SANDS SERIES



BOOK 1

Press of
Times-Mirror Printing and Binding House
Los Angeles, California

1922

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Chapter I

JERRY GOES WEST AND MEETS AN ENEMY

It was a hot August morning in a coal-mining town of Illinois. Mrs. Sands was sitting on the front steps of a rather run-down, little house, facing a dirty street along which a great many similar places—"company houses" they were called—were built.

Jerry Sands sat beside his mother. For over two weeks now the two had sat this way, at the same time each morning, peering anxiously down the hot board sidewalk that ran along in front of the house toward town.

"Here he comes, mother," Jerry would say, as each morning the stooped form of the mailman appeared in the distance. But each morning had come the same disappointment—no letter from father.

Over three months before, the elder Sands had left for the Far West to take up a home-



EAGERLY JERRY DRANK IN EVERY WORD

stead, and build a little home for his family. He was to send for them when all was ready. Jerry had read everything he could find, including railroad folders, old geographies, anything, in fact, that told him even a little of the West.

And now on this particular morning, to the great joy of both Jerry and his mother, the mail carrier delivered the precious letter. Eagerly Jerry drank in every word as his mother read:

My dear wife and Jerry:

I could not write sooner as I have been far out in the country here looking over the land that is still open for settlement. But it has been well worth the time and trouble, as I have located on two fine forties on the western slope of the Cascade Mountains and have almost finished a cabin for us.

You had better pack up and come at once to the Woodside Roads Station, where I will meet you. Don't bring anything but your clothes and a few kitchen things, as it is hard to get in here and we can make nearly every-

thing we need. There is a small lake on our land and all the game and fish Jerry's heart can desire. There are a few farmers scattered through the hills here already and they say most of them are very good people, although there is one family near us that doesn't seem to want us to come in; as I understand they were figuring on taking up this place themselves.

I am very lonesome for you both and will count the days until you come. I figure if you leave two days after this letter reaches there, you will be here on the first of September. You had better draw the money out of the Savings Bank, and after you buy your tickets, let Jerry carry part of what's left in case something happens, as this is all we have left now.

Your loving husband and father,
BEN SANDS.

Another slip of paper was enclosed with the letter, this one giving complete details of stations where Jerry and his mother

would change trains, and points of interest along the journey.

And so it was that Jerry started for the Woodside country. It was a delightful journey through the great, wide wheat and corn fields of the Middle West, on into the smaller, rugged, little farms of the newer settlements, and up into the towering Rocky Mountains of which Jerry had heard so much. It was, perhaps, the greatest event in his life. He took particular delight in sitting with his mother in the dining car for their morning meal, especially as the train struggled past the snow-capped peaks of the Rockies.

But as the days passed Jerry became more and more anxious about Woodside Roads. "Do you suppose there are any mountains like these in Woodside, mother?" he would ask as they passed some particularly majestic peak—or "Did dad say there was fishing in our lake?"—question after question, directed as much to his own wandering imagination as to his mother, came from Jerry, prompted largely by the particular scenery they were passing.

According to their schedule, they were due to arrive at Woodside Station early Friday morning. On Thursday night Jerry had gone to sleep reading and re-reading his father's letter and dreaming of his future home in the woods. The next morning, before the rest of his fellow-passengers were up, Jerry was fully dressed and peering out between the cars, longing for daylight to help him see the great country he was soon to become a part of. How large were the trees? Would there be a little town there with lots of people? He hoped not. Could he see their cabin from the station? All these and many more thoughts and questions raced through his mind as he peered into the darkness. The train seemed to be traveling faster than it had for days, for it was now going down grade, and Jerry was beginning to worry for fear they would leave the mountains entirely. But the train was taking long spiral turns down one particularly large hump, and while they were traveling at a fast rate, it seemed even faster compared with the slow up-grade speed of the past few days.

Jerry could just discern the first hint of pale light and was about to see if his mother was awake, when he saw her coming down the aisle, completely dressed, and followed by the porter carrying their bags.

“Good morning, Jerry boy,” greeted his mother. “The porter says we will be there in five minutes now. See—the train is slowing down already.”

True enough. The train was actually slowing down in fits and jerks, and Jerry could hear the steam gushing from the engine and then the loud whistle reverberating through the mountains, seeming to arouse even the trees that were gradually becoming visible.

Then with a grinding and final jerk, the train came to a standstill. To Jerry’s great delight, there were no houses of any kind in sight, and from what he could see they were still in the mountains.

“Here we are, Molly. Hello there, Jerry. Well! Well! Here at last,” came the deep strong voice of Mr. Sands, as he folded both his wife and boy in his great arms. Tenderly he held them, saying a lot of things

none could understand as the long train, released from its brakes, slipped noisily off down the mountain as if hurrying away from the great red sun now breasting the crest of the eastern ridges.

"Well," he said at length, "we'd better find some breakfast. We've got a long ride before us and we must get started before the sun gets too high. Come, Jerry, carry one of mother's bags and we'll see what we can find in the hotel."

The little party was all alone on the gravelled siding and now that the train had gone far down into the valley below, there were no further sounds to break the deep stillness of the early morning.

Woodside Roads was not quite so untenanted as Jerry had supposed, for his father soon led the way to a little cluster of houses, one of which served as the depot, standing between what appeared to be a sort of general merchandise store on one side and a drug store and post office combined on the other. Nearby was a low frame building, painted a dull red like the station, which Jerry surmised, and rightly, too, was a sort of railroad company hotel where the train

crews, or any guests or natives of the country, could stop. There was also a livery stable, and a few small dwellings were scattered about. But the only signs of life came from the little red hotel where an oil lamp still burned and where several railroad men could be seen washing their hands and faces from a long wooden basin.

As the Sands family entered the room, an elderly lady who was apparently preparing breakfast came forward to greet them.

"So your family has come at last, Mr. Sands? I'm so glad for you. And they seem to be just as happy as you," she added, as Mr. Sands introduced his wife and Jerry. "Now just come right in and have your breakfast. I know how far you must travel today, and it's going to be a hard trip on you, Mrs. Sands, the roads are so terrible."

Now Jerry was a sturdy lad, rather large for his thirteen years. His father had taught him many things a boy should know—particularly good manners, respect and courtesy for his mother, sportsmanship and manly conduct towards his boy friends, and above all, the ability to take care of himself.

During his father's absence in the West he had been the "man of the house" and had taken a keen delight in the responsibilities—some of them imaginary, of course—that his father's absence had meant.

Somehow, Jerry felt that from now on his responsibilities were going to be increased and real. He looked anxiously toward his mother to see how the news of the day's trip affected her. But Mrs. Sands was not a mother to be easily discouraged. In fact, she almost seemed to enjoy the prospect of the journey. She had always been strong and healthy and Jerry had many times heard her say how happy she would be to live on a homestead in the West, where she could help build up a home. Nevertheless, Jerry felt that he would be much happier when his mother was safely at the end of the journey, for the mountains and woods that seemed so friendly and grand to him must have many difficulties for women folks.

Breakfast was served just as Jerry's imagination had led him to expect. The table was long and made of coarse board. It was covered with a checkered red and white table-cloth, in the center of which a large oil

lamp was still burning. Jerry was impressed with the friendliness and hearty good humor of the railroad men who sat down to the table with them. The breakfast was an ample one—well browned bacon with eggs, hot, fluffy biscuits, honey and coffee.

“Such lovely honey,” Mrs. Sands remarked, “and such an odd flavor.”

“Yes,” the old lady answered, “one of the men discovered a large bee-tree the other day while out hunting for Old Burntsides. It’s the first honey we’ve had this summer.”

Jerry waited for his chance, and then in an undertone for fear some of the men might be amused at his question, he asked his father who Old Burntsides was.

“You’ll find out soon enough, Jerry,” his father replied. “Old Burntsides has eaten many a poor settler’s chickens. He’s the biggest black bear ever seen in these parts. Old Indian Dan says he lives up near our claims, but so far he has not put in an appearance.”

“But why do they call him Burntsides?” pursued Jerry.

“Oh—that’s because he has great brown

patches of fur on both sides. Some people think he was burned in the forest fires last year, but Indian Dan said that wouldn't show this year. He thinks—and he seems to know everything about wild things in the woods—that Old Burntsides is really not a black bear at all, but is a grizzly that has come into the timber from the higher mountains. I've been hoping that we would be prepared to get him ourselves if he came our way, but I guess we won't be able to this year."

It seemed to Jerry that his father was a little disappointed in something. He wondered what it was and all through the breakfast he kept thinking of Old Burntsides and his father's remark about not being prepared to go after him this year. But there were so many new subjects of interest being discussed that Jerry did not question his father further.

The breakfast finished, Jerry and his father left for the little barn that served as a livery stable and where Jerry was to find what would prove to be two of his best friends, a pair of faithful, long-eared mules. Jerry had already heard about them but

was thoroughly delighted when his father pointed out the two rather small but well-built animals that were standing fully harnessed eating from a manger.

"This is Buck," his father said as he called to the mule which bore the name. "You must always speak to mules before you get close to their heels, Jerry. Now old Buck here is a very friendly, lovable fellow, but if we walked quietly up and surprised him at a nap, he might kick without knowing who was near him. We call his partner here Reddy because of his color. He's good-natured and you'll learn to like him, too."

Jerry wanted to pitch right in and help with the hitching up, but his father advised him to go back to the hotel and see if he could find a place to change his clothes, for Jerry was still dressed in his best, which he would no longer need. He was, in fact, quite anxious to get into his old shirt and overalls, and to wear the new broad brimmed hat his mother had bought for him.

Hurry as they did, it was nearly nine o'clock before the little party was under way. Jerry observed that his mother made quite a warm friend of the old lady at the

hotel, whom she called Mrs. Downs. He heard her saying that if his mother ever needed help or anything, she should come right to her, as neighbors were rather scarce at the homestead.

Buck and Reddy were given a final drink of water from the large trough—evidently made by hollowing out a log—and the party was off. The wagon was a light, springy affair, with a rather high front seat, just wide enough to seat Mr. and Mrs. Sands comfortably. The wagon itself was partly covered with semi-circular strips, evidently long hazel bushes bent into shape. Over these was stretched a brown canvas, durable enough to withstand rain and wind. Jerry sat under this cover where he could watch the sacks of sugar, beans, potatoes, bacon, coffee, tinware, valises and bags.

Carefully Jerry looked over the entire lot. He pried open the long boxes, looked into the burlap sacks and under the front seat, but always without success.

“Father,” he finally asked, “haven’t we got a gun at all?”

His father at once caught the anxiety in Jerry’s expression. It was hard to give

him the answer, but he decided it would be better to explain it right away.

“No, Jerry, my boy, we can’t afford to spend money for guns yet. We have scarcely had enough money to buy our mules and provisions, and it will be nearly a year before we can sell any crops from the homestead. We must clear land and do lots of improvement work before the ground will be ready. You will have to get along the best you can this year. Maybe next year it will be different.”

Poor Jerry was nearly heart-broken. All his dreams of adventures and life in the woods had been built around a gun, steel traps and modern fishing tackle. For a moment it seemed as though the very woods were mocking him. He could not imagine a woodsman without a gun! But Jerry was to learn a lot within the next few days!

With one turn of the road, the little cluster of houses disappeared entirely from view and the mules trotted resolutely ahead into the dark forest of fir and hemlock. The road had only recently been cut through and it was still covered with a deep carpet of moss, old branches and badly trampled

salal berry bushes. Now and then Buck and Reddy would shake their long ears in protest as they stuck their fore legs into a cluster of prickly oregon-grape vines that were still standing in the center of the road.

So far as Jerry could see the road led in and out between the trees, first down one miniature valley and then along another, occasionally leading to rather steep places where Jerry had to get out and place a log or stone under the wheels to keep the wagon from pulling too strongly against the faithful mules as they were brought to a rest by Jerry's father.

As they traveled along, Mr. Sands told his wife and Jerry more about their new home.

"It's nearly twenty miles from the railroad where we had breakfast," he told them. "Our place seems to have very rich soil and plenty of good water. The summers are fine and the winters, too, are good, but of course there will be snow and ice."

"Are there any boys near our place?" put in Jerry.

"Oh, yes," his father answered, "but they are not real close. There is one family

about a quarter of a mile from us—the Norman family. They have two fine lads about your age, and then there are the Stuart boys, one your age and two small youngsters. You will meet some other boys out there, too—Tom Sloan's boys. They're a bad lot. I understand his boy has a cousin living with him now. I have only seen them once, but I don't think they are the kind I want you to associate with. I believe they are quite a little older than you anyhow."

He continued to talk of the new home, answering questions and discussing plans for the future. He never referred to the gun or traps again, and Jerry was beginning to find more interest in the signs of wild life about him than in his parents' discussion, especially since the subject was now turning toward a proposed plan for a country schoolhouse.

Like most any thirteen year old boy, Jerry was wondering how he would get along when he met the Sloan fellows. His father had said they were a bad lot, and he had never known his father to make a mistake of this kind. There was one thing cer-

tain. Jerry was not afraid. He had fought his way through a "gang" of toughs when he first went to the coal mining town and he had learned a lot of valuable lessons that would come in handy if the Sloan boys gave him occasion to come into unfriendly contact with them.

It was now nearing twelve o'clock, and the family decided to make a noonday camp by the side of a stream they had been following for some time. Jerry helped his father unhitch Buck and Reddy, feed them and stake them out near the stream so they could drink. Mrs. Sands busied herself with a large coffee pot, tins of meat, etc., while Mr. Sands built a fire.

Jerry took this occasion to explore a little of the stream. It was scarcely a dozen feet wide, about two feet deep and clear as crystal. Jerry thought he saw fish dart out from the shady side of the water and into the cover of ripples and dark holes as he went along, but he could not be sure. So intent was he on making certain about the fish that he wandered further along the stream than he realized. Without taking his eye from the water he rushed headlong into a

small pile of dead branches and roots, crashing through them and into the water below, which was really part of the creek that made a sharp turn at this point before widening out into a clearing.

"That's right, you clumsy mule, scare all the fish away," came an angry voice from the edge of the clearing. "Who said *you* could run loose in the woods, anyhow?"

Jerry was completely bewildered and dumbfounded as he gathered himself up through the broken roots and branches. He hardly knew what to say or do. He looked about quickly and soon discovered two boys, rather older than himself, seated on a log fishing. Instantly it flashed through his mind that these were the Sloan boys. A second later he was certain, as the talkative one said to the other, "We ought to give him a real ducking for blundering around this way. We'll teach him that this is the Sloan's fishing territory, for today anyhow."

"I am very sorry," stammered Jerry, still confused and getting red in the face. "I didn't mean to fall in the stream, and I'm not fishing here."

"Haw, haw, haw!" sneered the eldest of

the two boys; "suppose you think we're going to believe that? Think my cousin's right. I'd ought to duck you good."

He made a threatening move as if to start for Jerry. Perhaps he thought Jerry would take to his heels, but if he thought so he was wrong. Jerry was naturally a good-natured young man and did not hunt trouble. But he hated bullies and was never afraid of them. Quickly he glanced about for an open space where he would be clear of the brush and water. The Sloan boy, whom his cousin addressed as Albert, saw what was going on in Jerry's mind and advanced quickly toward him, so that he could attack before Jerry was entirely clear of the water and brush. Jerry saw that it was useless to attempt to clear himself. He looked anxiously about for some means of defense. He could call for his father, but pride kept him from doing this. He could ask Albert Sloan and his cousin to let him come out and fight fairly but something told him they were not the kind who fought fairly. Jerry was still standing in about two feet of water, several feet from the cleared bank on which Albert was running

toward him. Directly back of Jerry and about two feet from where he was standing the water surged into a deep hole where it whirled about in angry circles. It was plain that Jerry's enemy intended to push him into this hole. But Jerry was not afraid. Quick as a flash he had made his plan. A large old hemlock shaded the water hole. It was the rotten wet roots from this tree, in fact, that had caused Jerry's trouble in the first place. Now, Jerry planned to make it help him out of it. One large branch hung directly over his head. He measured the distance with his eyes and found he could easily reach it. Calmly he waited for the bully who came on with quick strides to take advantage of his position and push him in the deep water hole. With much bad language and a ferocious look, Albert Sloan rushed. But just as quickly, Jerry made two steps toward him and then to the utter amazement of Sloan and his cousin, turned his back!

"He's going to make a dive!" yelled Sloan's cousin in glee.

"But I'm going to give him a good start," growled Albert, who, misled into thinking



THUD! THUD! CAME JERRY'S FEET AGAINST HIS BACK

Jerry really intended to spring into the hole in terror, wanted to make an impression on his cousin and get credit for throwing Jerry in. Consequently he lunged with much less caution than he would otherwise have used. But Jerry was far too nimble for the clumsy Albert. Quickly he grasped the limb above him and swung out over the hole. With a rush Albert swept under him and all but pitched headlong into the water. He had hardly straightened himself up when thud! thud! came Jerry's feet against his back. Such force did Jerry use that he sent his heavier opponent crashing through the old roots, headlong into the water hole. Another swing and Jerry was clear of the roots himself and well into the timber.

"Help! Help! I'm drowning. George! George!" Albert called to his cousin, who, ignoring Jerry, rushed to Albert's rescue. Jerry remained under cover of the woods long enough to see George pull his cousin Albert from the water hole, but not until George himself had fallen through the rotten roots and branches for a thorough ducking. Both boys came up, faces and hands badly scratched and bleeding, and, of course, with

their clothes wringing wet. Sheepishly they looked about to see if Jerry was still there.

"I'm here, all right," he called. "I'm Jerry Sands and I would keep you two bullies in the water all day, only I must be going. But I'll see you fellows again!" Threats and more bad language came from the cousins, who were heartily disgusted over their defeat. But Jerry, completely satisfied with his first adventure, slipped quietly back through the trees and joined his folks who were just about to call him for the noonday meal.

Chapter II

THE FIRST CAMP IN THE WOODS

The little party hurried through the noon meal. Distant thunder and darkening skies caused anxious looks from Mr. Sands. Jerry related his experience up the stream in high glee, but his parents were very much concerned. Only the approaching storm prevented Mr. Sands from going up the stream himself to settle with young Sloan and his cousin George. As it was, all haste was made to get under way before the approaching storm broke.

"There's a very bad place in the road about five miles up," Mr. Sands explained. "I have never seen it during a thunder storm, but Norman told me it frequently floods and makes the roads impassable for days. He and his two boys left the railroad with provisions about one hour before us this morning. Norman told me he feared a thunder storm following the hot spell of the last few days."

Within an hour the storm broke. Great smashing peals of thunder followed each vivid flash of lightning. Rain fell in torrents. Jerry huddled under the shelter of the canvas which had now been stretched up over the seat bows also, to protect the entire party. Buck and Reddy did not falter. With ears cocked forward, alertness in every fibre, they strained ahead through the fast accumulating mud.

Presently Reddy threw up his head and stopped short.

"Hello! Must be something ahead. Come on, Reddy—out of this," Mr. Sands gave a vigorous jerk on Reddy's line. The mule responded promptly, but seemed very reluctant to keep on. The rain kept pouring down in great sheets and it almost seemed as though the party would have to drive off the road under some nearby hemlocks for protection. Jerry and his father agreed, however, that it would be better to get over the hill they were on before making a stop. As they neared the top, old Buck began to share Reddy's uneasiness. And no wonder! Soon the little gully below came

into sight. Directly across the road, and flooding it on either side, a huge brown torrent of water was raging. Sticks, old logs, little piles of ferns and green branches raced by at an alarming rate. Buck and Reddy refused to go farther.

"This is bad," was all Jerry heard from his father. Together they jumped to the ground and followed the curve in the road which had been cut around the side of the gully in a sort of V-shaped angle.

As they rounded this curve, who should they find, much to their surprise, but Mr. Norman and his two boys, who had drawn their horses and wagon off the road on to a little shelving of level ground.

"We just rounded this curve when the first rush of water came," Norman explained to Mr. Sands after they had greeted each other and expressed much pleasure at meeting.

Jerry was particularly pleased to meet the two Norman boys, Jim and Dick. Jim, the older, was a quiet sort of lad, stockily built and about the same size as Jerry. His brother Dick, although younger was taller.

He was wiry and slender and seemed to be always moving about as though anxious to be doing something.

"Well," Mr. Sands was saying, "there's no use trying to make the stream today. I don't think the storm will let up before nightfall. We'd better camp right here." Norman was of the same opinion and together they went to talk it over with Mrs. Sands, leaving the boys huddled together under the canvas of Norman's wagon. No one stirred for nearly an hour. The storm increased in severity. Darkness was only a few hours off and the older folks began to be uneasy about approaching night. The wagon beds were not large and what space there was seemed well filled with provisions, bags and grain. The canvas covers could not be spared as much of these goods would be ruined if they should get wet.

About four o'clock, however, the heavy peals of thunder ceased and the rain settled into a steady drizzle.

"Come, boys," called Mr. Sands, who seemed to have taken the leadership, "now's our chance to make camp before night falls. Jerry, you unhitch the mules

and lead them after me; Mr. Norman and I will see what we can find for a camp site."

Jerry set to work with a will and had the two mules unhitched and was taking the harness from their steaming backs, when his two companions passed him, each leading a horse.

A camp site was laid out about a hundred yards back and to one side of the road. Here the hemlocks and cedars grew thickly and Jerry soon found that in many places beneath their spreading branches the water had hardly penetrated at all.

"Tie each of the animals very securely," cautioned Mr. Sands. "When the banshees cry tonight, they will be badly frightened. When you are finished, come over here and I will show you how to make camp for the night."

The boys did as they were told and presently were ready for Mr. Sand's instructions. First, they selected a large hemlock tree. The first branches were nearly ten feet from the ground and hung like great umbrellas over the men and boys. More branches were cut and placed one over the other about the foot of the tree. Side

branches were erected and before long a very comfortable shelter was formed. Many of the huge roots of the hemlock grew out of the ground for several feet and formed excellent seats. Soon the boys were set to work stripping the bark from a large fir snag that had evidently been struck by lightning years before. The bark was placed near the camp, ready for the evening fire. Mr. Norman and the boys then helped carry enough of the provisions and things from the Sands' wagon to Normans' to allow for a comfortable bed for Mr. and Mrs. Sands under the cover of their wagon.

Before long the aroma of frying bacon and boiling coffee drifted out from beneath the hemlock. The wet, tired party sat around the heap of glowing bark, much cheered by its warmth and the prospects of supper. Mrs. Sands was the most cheerful member of the party, and every one agreed they were fortunate to have such a splendid cook with them.

After supper, Jerry told Jim and Dick about his experiences with Albert Sloan and his cousin George.

"Yes," Jim said, "my brother and I have

had a lot of trouble with them. They are always shooting song birds and catching muskrats in the summer time. We asked them not to and so did father, but they are very mean about it. One of their cousins shot into a whole flock of robins last week and killed nine of them. The robins are flying in flocks now, you know, before they go south for the winter.

"When I asked Albert Sloan not to trap muskrats in the summer when their fur is shedding, he just looked mean and said it was none of my business because I never trapped them even in the winter time."

"But I thought everyone trapped here in the winter time," put in Jerry.

"No, not when you haven't any traps or guns or anything. But that's no reason why they should spoil the trapping and kill the animals out of season," Jim replied.

Then Jerry understood. None of them had the precious guns and traps of which Jerry had dreamed. Without further words, he placed another armful of bark on the fire and for several moments seemed deep in thought.

"Fellows," he said at length, "I've got

an idea." He got up quickly and walked around the fire several times before talking further. Dick could hardly wait to hear what Jerry had to say. Jim was equally anxious and was all attention when Jerry again took his seat and commenced.

"There's only one way for us to do any hunting and trapping this fall, and that's to learn the Indian ways. I heard dad say something about an old Indian Dan today. Maybe he can help us and—"

"Fine!" exclaimed Jim and Dick together. "I tell you what we can do—we can—"

"But wait a minute," Jerry continued. "We must remember that it will all be new to us and that we will have to learn little by little. Do you know Indian Dan?"

"No," confessed Jim. "We've both seen him, of course, but he doesn't have much to do with the settlers. Last Fourth of July, Dan and a lot of Indians came to Woodside Roads from the reservation. They were going to have a big dance, but they got angry or something and left. But I spent nearly a day with them, and had a fine time learning to talk and make gestures and signs like they do. I think old Dan

liked me. I never knew why they left so soon."

"I know what they were angry at," exclaimed Dick. "Somebody offered one of the Indian boys a quarter to dance in the hotel for a party. Old Dan saw the man offer the quarter and he stopped it."

"What did Old Dan do?" asked Jerry.

"Oh, he pulled out a silver dollar and said, 'White man come dance my camp,' then threw back his head, stalked out and said a few words in Siwash. Soon the whole camp was deserted."

"I guess we'd better be mighty careful about Indian Dan, then," Jerry observed. "How far is it to where he lives?"

"It's almost thirty miles to the edge of the reservation. But every fall the Indians come near our place and spear salmon. We will have to see them then," Dick replied.

"Come, boys, make sure the animals are well secured. It's bedtime," broke in Mr. Sands.

Jerry hastened to see if Buck and Reddy were properly tied. He found them comfortable, standing close together under a nearby cedar tree. Jim and Dick found

their animals to be all right, and soon the party was ready for the night. Mr. and Mrs. Sands went to their wagon while Mr. Norman and the boys curled up on the hemlock boughs, feet toward the fire. Fortunately the night was not cold. The smoldering bark threw a warm glow about the little hemlock enclosure, which together with the old blanket lap robes, kept the party comfortable.

The moon was up but not a ray of light penetrated the forest. Jerry lay on one edge of the bed of boughs, Mr. Norman at the other, with Jim and Dick in between.

At first, not a sound could be heard above the faint swirl of the swollen stream. Jerry tried to sleep.

“Whooo—whooo—whooo—” something was calling far out in the woods. Jerry wondered what it was.

“Whooo—whooo—whooo—” something answered from the very tree above him.

Jerry recognized it now. It was an owl, but somehow it sounded so queer in the stillness of the night! Visions of Old Burntsides, Indian Dan, Albert Sloan and his cousin raced through Jerry’s drowsy head.

No sooner would he force them from his thoughts than a sharp snapping of twigs would bring him bolt upright. Then he would remember the horses and mules and thank goodness it was too dark for his companions to see him. A light breeze had come up and soon the rustling of the great branches overhead drowned out other night noises and Jerry slept.

"Jerry! Jerry! Get up quick! Listen!" Dick was poking Jerry in the ribs.

"Quiet, boys—we must see to the animals," Mr. Norman cautioned. Jerry jumped up completely bewildered. For a moment he had no idea where he was, or what the sudden commotion was about.

"What's all the—" His question was cut short by a piercing scream which seemed to make the very boughs of their shelter tremble. Hardly had it died down when another scream even more blood curdling than the first came from the other side of the stream. Jerry was frightened. So were the Norman boys.

"Mountain lions," explained Mr. Norman. "They smell the fresh meat in our wagons and have been following us."

Suddenly the horses and mules joined in the general commotion. Snorting and squealing with fright, the horses tugged madly on their halters. Buck and Reddy were badly excited, but were not so frantic.

Mr. Norman and the three boys hastened to the animals. First they came to Buck and Reddy. Their halters were tight and Mr. Norman rushed on to quiet his two horses. A terrifying scream, nearer than the last, came just as he reached for the halters!

One frightened lunge and Spot, the horse farthest from Mr. Norman, freed himself from the tree and made off into the night! Pursuit was hopeless as all was black as ink and the underbrush heavy. It was all the man and boys could do to keep the three remaining animals from following Spot.

Soon a vivid blaze of light came from the road. Mr. Sands had made a fire and was calling to Mr. Norman to do likewise. A few armfuls of bark and branches and their fire blazed brightly. True to Mr. Sands' prediction, the screams became fainter and fainter as the lions retreated further from the bright blaze of the fires.

Mr. and Mrs. Sands soon joined the rest, and together they discussed the loss of Spot. Spot was a cayuse and was not yet broken to consider the Norman homestead as home. Mr. Sands knew how serious the situation was. A homesteader must have a team of horses. Mr. Norman had struggled hard to save money enough to buy his team, and to lose Spot now would be a hardship indeed.

"Where do you think he will go?" asked Jerry.

"It's hard to say," answered Mr. Norman. "I bought him from the Indian agent at the reservation thirty miles or more from here. He may go there. He certainly won't come back to this camp and he isn't likely to come to the homestead as he hasn't been with us long enough to forget his former home on the Indian reservation."

"There is only one thing to do. Someone must try and trail him in the morning," concluded Mr. Sands. "There is plenty for him to eat right around here and I don't think he will go far after his first mad rush."

Jerry looked at his two companions and cautioned silence.

"Here's our chance," he whispered. "Let's

get them to let us hunt Spot. We can try our hands at being Indians right away."

Jim and Dick nodded eager assent.

"You'd better ask your father," Dick proposed. "He doesn't think Spot has gone far. Father looks worried. He thinks Spot will go back to the reservation. He never would allow us to go that far for him."

Jerry needed no urging. Calling his father to one side, he came to the point at once.

"Father, why can't Jim, Dick and I hunt for Spot in the morning? They know the way home along the road and you don't need us on the trip."

"But you might get hopelessly lost," his father objected.

"We couldn't," Jerry replied. "I heard you say all the streams along this slope cross the road. Well, we can't miss finding a stream, because they are always in the bottoms of the gullies and the gullies are easy to find."

"But what would you do when you did find a stream?"

"Follow right up stream till we came to the road," Jerry replied promptly.

Mr. Sands turned to his friend.

“Norman, I think my boy is right. Spot must be close about here. You hitch your wagon behind ours and we will get an early start home in the morning. Leave the boys here to bring in Spot. It’s mostly down grade from here to our place, anyway.”

This proposal was followed by a long discussion. Mr. Norman, and often Mrs. Sands, would raise some objection that seemed to settle it. Jerry or his companions would then urge their point further until it was finally decided that the boys should remain and search for Spot.

Jerry found, upon inquiring the time, that all had slept longer than he had realized, and that it was well past three in the morning.

After the excitement of the night, no one thought of further sleep. More wood was piled on the fires and after a while the boys found themselves alone in the hemlock shelter, the older folks having gone to the fire by the wagons.

“I hope Spot does decide to go back to the reservation,” confided Jerry as soon as they were alone.

"So do I," Jim and Dick both agreed. "Only," added Jim, "we'd better tell the folks not to worry if we don't get back for a day or so. You know, they really think we can get Spot sometime this morning; at least, your folks do, Jerry."

"Oh, Jerry can take care of that all right," Dick said. "What are we going to take with us? I'd feel a lot safer if we had a gun. Whee! But didn't that mountain lion scream last night!" Dick was excitedly walking around in circles anxiously watching for daylight to break.

"Have you fellows got pocket knives?" asked Jerry, pulling out his own, which proved to be a splendid single bladed knife.

For an answer, Dick and Jim both produced pocket knives, which seemed strong enough for real work.

"That's fine," said Jerry. "Now, let's go over the things we're going to need. Let's see—there are two lap robe blankets and and I'm sure we can find bacon, coffee, onions and bread in the wagons."

"Better not take bread," suggested Jim.

"Why?" asked Dick.

"Because," his brother explained, "don't

you see, the bushes and trees are all soaking wet. Our blankets and everything are sure to get wet, and if we have bread, it will soak all up and be useless."

"He's right," declared Jerry. "We must be sure and pack our provisions in tin cans if there are any. And, anyhow, we must be sure and put our matches in a can or something."

"Huh! I'll bet the Indians never had cans!" came from Dick. "I'll show you what they would do." Whereupon he set to work with his knife on a strange looking dead branch that had been mixed with the bark.

"This is an elder berry branch," he explained. "I've noticed they often grow near streams or damp places."

He quickly cut three pieces from the branch, each one about four inches long. Next he cut a slender stem from a live hemlock bough out of which he made a little ramrod. Much to Jerry's surprise, he found the center of the elder berry pieces came out easily when Dick pushed the ramrod through them! A moment later, he had stoppers made for the ends, and gave his

brother Jim and Jerry each a perfectly dry little tube for matches! And one that would keep them dry, too!

"This is great!" said Jerry enthusiastically. "Jim, from now on, let's call Dick 'Chief Thinking One'."

Dick was proud of his feat and accepted the name with much dignity.

"I think this is a good start," Jim said. "But so far, Dick is the only Indian. Jerry and I must earn a name before we can really start our tribe. I think we are going to have a good chance, too, in the next few days, don't you, Jerry?"

"I feel sure of it," replied Jerry. "And I think I'd better go and see about provisions now. I can smell coffee boiling over by the wagons."

The boys proceeded to the wagon camp, where they found Mrs. Sands busily at work preparing breakfast. Soon the impenetrable blackness of night gave way to the grey light of early morning. No rain had fallen since the day before, but still the soggy wetness hung like a blanket over the hills and valleys.

No one but the eager boys would welcome

a plunge into the glistening wet undergrowth of the forest. But as the great red sun slowly climbed into the eastern horizon, three anxious pairs of eyes watched every shaking bush or tree, fearing lest Spot should make an appearance before the boys set out.

With the increasing light, it was found that the stream had gone down enough to allow the wagons to pass, so the party hurried through their breakfast, as much remained to be done.

Jerry took care of the blanket packs, arranging the coffee, bacon, flour, salt, sugar and onions in the center of the blankets in such a way as to keep them as dry as possible. When Mrs. Sands asked why the boys were taking so many things along, Jerry explained that they might meet someone who had seen Spot making for the reservation or for the Woodside Roads Station, and if they did, they would go after him, even if it took them an extra day. Mrs. Sands expressed doubt as to whether the boys should be allowed to stay over night in the woods, but Mr. Sands and Mr. Norman explained the bare possibility of such

a thing being necessary, and the subject was dropped.

After breakfast, the two mules were hitched to the Sands' wagon. This was drawn up in front of Norman's and the two hitched together. Norman's remaining horse was then hitched in front of the mule team and the journey to the homesteads was resumed. The boys stayed with the wagons long enough to help the men push them up the hill on the opposite side of the stream. This was the last steep hill on the road, Mr. Norman explained, the three animals being easily able to haul the load the rest of the way.

The boys stood at the top of the hill for several minutes after they had bid their parents farewell. None of them spoke as the wagons turned a curve in the road, leaving the boys all alone in the woods. Dick was the first to break the silence.

"Maybe Spot isn't so far away, after all," he said, looking wistfully at the turn in the road where the wagons had disappeared.

"Is Chief Thinking One afraid of the hunting trip? Does he want to be with the

women and children in the village?" Jerry bantered, in true Indian style.

Dick was a little crestfallen and wished he hadn't said anything. Nevertheless, Jerry and Jim were also strangely quiet, and while neither spoke, each one secretly felt that Spot would be a very welcome horse if he were to come walking up the road that moment.

But this feeling did not last long. The bright sun soon sent its warm rays over the wet wood and road. Countless flocks of birds swarmed from tree to tree, alighting with such force as to send showers of water with a splash to the ground below.

Out in the woods, where Spot had last been seen, a squirrel was chattering a friendly welcome to the sun and birds, making such a racket that a blue jay, perched on the top of a young cedar, began screaming in protest.

The boys soon caught the spirit of the morning, and with light hearts and high hopes made ready for the plunge into the woods, the trip that was to mean so much to them!

There were only two packs to carry, so Jerry and Jim, both being older than Dick, took them up. This was not the reason they gave for doing so, however.

“‘Palefaces’ work,” said Jerry. “Chief Thinking One big Indian. He will guide.” Whereupon Dick took the lead, the others following. He made at once for the hemlock shelter, near which Spot had been tied before making his escape.

Chapter III

JIM BECOMES CHIEF GREAT HUNTER

Once in the woods, all were serious. Spot's trail, easily seen in the open places and still easier to follow where he had broken branches and ferns, was a silent reminder of the terrible noises of the night before.

Travel was difficult. First the blanket packs would catch in the branches, then the trailers would lose sight of one another in the dense growth. Conversation was impossible. They were nearing the stream again and the undergrowth seemed to grow even denser.

Spot must have found traveling equally hard, for in several places great tufts of reddish-white hair had been left on thorns and sharp branches. Nor was his trail a straight one. Just before reaching the first signs of water, it turned abruptly and made for the ridge of the hill to the left. Where the trail turned Dick had stopped short.

"Some reason for this," he said, as Jim and Jerry came up. "Let's see if we can find what it is." Without further words, he dropped to his hands and knees and carefully examined the ground beneath the bushes. "See," he exclaimed, "some animal has done this."

Jim and Dick pressed forward and saw the signs their companion had discovered. The ferns and moss had been beaten down for a space almost two feet wide.

"Evidently some animal had made his bed here," said Jim. "Spot must have surprised him and become frightened again."

From this point on, all three were more careful to observe the signs around them. Twice they ran across rabbits and once a larger animal, which might have been a deer rushing through the brush ahead, could be plainly heard. The trail was leading straight for the ridge now, and the boys were glad of it. None of them liked the traveling through the wet underbrush, which was hard to walk through at best.

As they approached the ridge, the brush became thinner and thinner until finally they found themselves walking freely be-

tween tall straight spruce trees with nothing to hinder their progress. Spot had apparently slowed down here. In several places, Jim pointed out from his trail where he had evidently run into a tree in the darkness. His tracks were still plainly visible in the carpet of brown spruce needles that covered the ground.

"Chief Thinking One is tired," suddenly exclaimed Dick. "Let's rest." The others needed no urging. Quickly throwing their packs to the ground, they seated themselves on nearby stones where the direct rays of the morning sun filtered down between the branches overhead.

Jerry was light-hearted and was thoroughly enjoying the adventure. Looking as solemn as he could, he addressed Dick.

"Oh, Chief Thinking One," he began, "how can we get game for our food when we have no guns of the palefaces?"

"Yes," put in Jim, "and suppose we, instead of Spot, had come on to that animal in the brush, what could we have done?"

In spite of Jerry's humor, the boys were in serious earnest.

"I've been thinking," answered Dick,

"that we ought to make a bow and arrow. Do you know how to make one, Jerry?"

Jerry shook his head.

"Well, I've made little ones, but I've never tried to make one like we need here," Dick said. "But I'll try, anyhow. You fellows wait a while, and I'll see what I can find."

Jim and Jerry watched Dick as he made his way down the slope of the hill to the thickets below. Presently they saw him returning with a long green rod in his hands.

"This is vine-maple," he explained, as he came up. "It's the best wood around here for bows."

With sharp, quick strokes, he cut the smaller limbs from the branch and trimmed the ends evenly. The stick was only about three feet long, but Jerry found he could bend it almost double without breaking it.

"Now for the string," exclaimed Jim.

"I never thought of that," confessed Dick. "What are we going to do?"

Try as they would, none of them could think of a thing.

"I've got it," Jerry exclaimed at length. "Use my belt!"

Quickly he took his leather belt from around his waist, and Dick set to work at once cutting two narrow strips from it. Jerry put what was left about his waist again, and Dick, after tying the two strips together, fastened them to the slightly bent stick of vine-maple. Again he went to the thicket below, this time coming up with several straight sticks all free from leaves and tiny branches.

"These are hazel bush shoots," he said, "and will make good straight arrows."

Peeling the bark from them, he cut niches in one end, just large enough to allow the belt string to fit. Carefully he held the bow in his left hand and drew back the arrow with his right. To the great satisfaction of all, the arrow traveled with great speed and in a fairly straight line. But it had hardly gone one hundred feet when it deliberately turned and went sailing off to one side.

"Needs something heavy in the end," suggested Jim.

Once more they seemed at a loss. But soon Chief Thinking One again proved he had earned his name.

"I have three blades in my knife," he

said, "and so have you, Jim. Let's use the two smaller ones for arrow-heads. They are at least two inches long and very sharp."

The idea was gladly accepted and soon Jerry had unscrewed the side pieces from the Norman boys' knives, taking out the four smaller blades as suggested. He then placed the side pieces together and fastened them as securely as before. Dick now split the slender hazel arrows at one end just far enough to hold about one-half inch of the knife blade.

Now another difficulty presented itself! How were they to hold the knife blades in place? This time it was Jim's turn to find the answer. Quite by accident, he had discovered that wild cherry bark always peeled off in long circular strips round and round the trunks of the trees. When Jim explained his idea, he was chosen to hunt for the cherry tree in the thicket below.

Clump after clump of bushes failed to reveal wild cherry and soon Jim found himself on the bank of the stream. It was here he came upon the trees he was looking for—and also upon something else! The flooded stream the day before had left a good-sized

pond of water in a hollow, completely shut off from the main stream, which was again within its own banks. As Jim passed this small pond, he was startled by the sound of splashing. Cautiously he parted the bushes and looked about.

Soon a great brown trout leaped high out of the water at a passing bug and came down with a splash! As the bug skimmed over the surface, trout after trout jumped for it, until Jim saw that the fish were evidently trapped by the falling water and had apparently eaten all the food in the little pond. Quickly he peeled the bark from the cherry tree and retraced his steps. At first he thought he would tell his companions all about his discovery. Then an idea came to him!

"What would you think if we had some game for dinner?" he asked.

"Hum—I think that would be worth the name 'Chief Great Hunter'," exclaimed Jerry. "But it isn't very likely to happen."

"Might get a rabbit," said Dick, who was deftly wrapping the cherry bark around the split which held the knife blade. "With this arrow we could kill one easily."

"Yes, but they are wormy and not fit to eat this time of year," Jerry objected. He did not say that he had heard so only the day before, when he asked his father to stop so he could throw a stone at a rabbit that sat beside the road as they passed.

"Well, I will try and get something," said Jim. "I like the name of Great Hunter myself. Let me have the bow and arrow for a little while when you are through, Dick."

The boys made no objection, although it was already nearly an hour since they had stopped. Finally, the arrows finished, Jim was permitted to make the first trial shots. Jerry was surprised to find how well his friend did, and asked him how he happened to learn so quickly. Jim then confessed that both his brother and himself had often used smaller bows and arrows before coming to the homestead.

"I never thought of using them for hunting, though, until you mentioned it last night," he added.

Having tried the new arrows thoroughly, Jim quickly made for the pond where he had seen the great brown trout jumping

from the water. Carefully he crept through the underbrush. As he neared the water-hole at the edge, he lay flat on his stomach and listened.

Spl—ash! Spl—ash! They were still jumping!

“Won’t the boys be surprised! If I can only shoot one!” Jim thought, as he crept on. His heart was pounding so fast that he could hear it plainly. Now and then he would snap a branch or root beneath his knees, and anxiously wait to see if the trout had heard and stopped jumping.

Finally he reached the edge of the pond and rose to his knees. A great trout came splashing along the top of the water, jumping continually at a small butterfly that was vainly trying to cross the narrow pond. Jim put the arrow to the leather thong and made ready. Nearer and nearer came the trout. With a final pull, Jim drew the arrow back until the knife blade nearly touched his left hand. Quickly he sighted along the arrow. Then as the trout came up for a final jump, he let go. With a great rush trout, arrow, butterfly and all went under. The water was still too muddy from

the day before for Jim to see the bottom. Almost holding his breath from excitement, he watched for the arrow to come to the surface. Had he missed? Had his arrow stuck in the mud at the bottom? He wished he had brought another one!

Eagerly Jim watched the now quiet pond. A commotion in the deep water directly below him drew his attention. Something white, faintly twisting in the water, was slowly coming up through the cloudy lower water into the clearer water near the surface. Then Jim recognized his trout, its back toward the bottom with the arrow clear through and protruding fully six inches beyond! With eager hands Jim grasped for his prize and all but fell into the water in his hurry to have him safe on land.

"I've got him! I've got him!" he cried over and over as he struggled with the slippery fish. Finally, with bow in one hand and carrying the trout by the gills with the other, Jim came breathlessly up to his two companions.

Jerry and Dick could hardly believe their eyes.

"What have you? Where did you get him?" they cried together.

Jim was out of breath, but panted his story as best he could.

"From now on, he is Chief Great Hunter!" exclaimed Jerry proudly. "Only one poor pale face left in the party! But just you wait. My turn will come!"

For several minutes the boys admired the large trout and asked Jim again and again how he did it.

"If we don't find Spot, we can cook the fish for supper."

Jerry and Dick agreed to this, and after wrapping the large trout, which weighed nearly three pounds, in Jerry's blanket pack, the party set out once more on the trail of Spot.

Chief Thinking One again took the lead, followed by Chief Great Hunter. Jerry came behind, determined to take advantage of the first opportunity to earn a real Indian name as well as the admiration of his two companions. It was agreed between them that each would be called "Chief" until all had gained names. After each

had gained his name, the first one to have a second important adventure, or the first one to do something unusual, would be selected as the Chief, and he would then be the leader.

Spot's tracks were still plainly visible and once it seemed they would soon come upon him, when they found where he had tramped about in one place for a long time, evidently browsing on the wild grass that grew in patches beneath the trees.

"Would you like to find him now?" asked Jim.

"Well," replied Jerry, "I guess I *should* be glad to, but I hope I have an adventure of some kind first, so I can really be part of the tribe."

"Well, you may be the first to see Spot, and then you will be Chief Hawk Eye," suggested Dick.

"Aw, that wouldn't be worth it," complained Jerry. "I want to really do something to earn my name, like you fellows have done."

"But I haven't done so much," Dick replied.

"Oh, yes, you have," his brother answered.

"You were the first to actually make something very useful from the woods. You taught us both a valuable lesson."

"Well, I hope something soon comes along for Jerry to do," Dick replied.

The trail now took a zig-zag course and the boys were finding it harder and harder to follow. Spot, it seemed, had decided to walk in a circle. For a long time, the boys were completely confused.

"I'll bet he was trying to make up his mind which way to go from here," said Jim.

"If that's the case," Jerry replied, "he must have taken wings or gone somewhere without leaving any tracks. Maybe Chief Thinking One can tell us what to do."

Jerry meant it in fun, but Dick took it very seriously.

"I believe," he replied, "that we had all better sit down and think." Whereupon the three sat down and tried to think out some answer to the mystery.

"It is plain that he walked in a circle several times," Jim pointed out, "and he must have gone off in some direction over ground that leaves very poor tracks, for we have found none."

"Well, what does Chief Thinking One say?" demanded Jerry.

"I say," Dick replied, "that we have been fooled by Spot's tracks. His trail leads somewhere from this circle, but we have not found the place."

"We know that, but how will we find it?" Jim demanded.

"By going about a hundred yards from these tracks and walking in a circle until we come upon his tracks again," declared Dick.

As usual, Dick had thought of the right thing. Jim and Jerry agreed at once and soon began searching as Dick suggested. Before long they again found where Spot had leisurely walked about, munching the wild grass which grew thicker and thicker as he walked through the scattered trees of the hillside.

"Guess we'll find him 'most any time, now," suggested Jerry.

"Looks that way," agreed Jim. "I hope he still has his rope hanging from his halter so we can catch him."

"Hey, look here, you fellows, quick!" shouted Dick, who, as was his nature, had

gone on ahead tracing Spot's tracks as rapidly as possible. "You think we will find him soon! Just look at this!"

The boys rushed up to where Dick was standing. There before him lay the shredded remnants of Spot's halter, evidently torn from his neck when it became entangled around his feet. Up to this point, the tracks had been hardly noticeable. Now they were much farther apart and very plain. There could be no mistake. Spot had again become frightened and had dashed off at a mad pace.

"It must have been dark still when he ran from here," said Dick. "See! He ran right down this hillside! I'll bet there is a stream down there, too, just like there is on the other side."

The three made off at once. The tracks were easy to follow and they soon made the first fringe of brush in the gully below. Spot had plunged right through and headlong into the small stream, which, true to Dick's prediction, ran its course along the bottom of the ravine. The tracks still showed how badly frightened poor Spot must have been, for even the brush had hardly held him back.

"I would like to know what frightened him," said Jerry. "Let's look around and see if we can find any other tracks."

The idea appealed to his companions and soon the three commenced walking in circles again, each circle being further away from the stream.

"Here's something," shouted Jerry, after a few minutes of searching. "Look here, here are tracks, and they are even larger than Spot's!"

Jim and Dick came running up as Jerry rushed excitedly along a trail of large tracks, plainly seen in the fast drying mud of the stream-bed of the day before.

"What is it? What is it? They're fresh! Look at these great claw marks! I'll bet he is chasing Spot!" the boys shouted to each other, becoming more and more excited as they rushed along.

"There's only one animal in these woods large enough to make such great tracks," Dick finally declared, as the boys sat down to rest, "and that's a bear. These tracks are much larger than Spot's. He must be a very big bear!"

"Old Burntsides, I'll bet," concluded

Jerry. "I heard the men say at the Woodside Station hotel that some hunters had seen him in the forest only a few days ago."

"Do you really think it is Old Burntsides?" Jim inquired anxiously, as he looked down on the bow and arrows which lay across his lap. Jerry and Dick followed his glance. How helpless their weapon seemed as they gazed at the huge tracks of the bear.

"Look! Look! What's that!" Dick exclaimed with a start as he observed still another track, much fainter than the first, that seemed to run along behind the bear's trail.

"It looks like a man's track, but I don't see any heel to it," said Dick, as he bent over one of the tracks Jerry had pointed out. "It is a man's track, though—but he must have on queer shoes! Look how round-looking the tracks are!"

"I wonder what a man could be doing along here. Look!" and Jim pointed out one of the strange man's tracks that had been made directly over one left by Spot. "He can't be very far ahead of us. Let's hurry along and see if we can get sight of him!"

Again the boys bent over the trail and made their way through the underbrush as fast as possible. For a short while all three trails, left by the bear, the strange man and Spot, ran along together. Spot's trail soon turned off, however, and once more made for the side of the little valley. Jerry thought it would be best for him to trail Spot, leaving the two brothers to follow the remaining trails along the edge of the stream. It was agreed that this plan should be carried out so long as they could keep within calling distance.

Jerry had no difficulty in following Spot's hoof prints, for the slope of the hill was quite steep and Spot had pawed down much dirt in climbing it.

It seemed to Jerry they must have been traveling nearly an hour when he was surprised by Dick, who suddenly appeared before him after scrambling over the top of the slope. Jerry was about to shout a greeting when Dick placed his finger to his mouth and cautioned silence.

"We've hit upon the man's camp," he whispered, "and the ashes are still hot! He can't be more than just a little ways ahead

of us now. Jim thinks you'd better come down."

Jerry agreed and together they hastened to join Jim. Just as Dick had said, they came to a small camp-fire. The little mound of ashes, hardly more than six inches across, was still hot. Several sticks with prongs at one end indicated that a meal had been prepared. The bones of a fish and remnants of corn meal were also found nearby.

"It's evidently someone tracking Old Burntsides," was Jerry's opinion. "I think we had better hurry on and find him. It seems as though we would have to camp in the woods tonight—and maybe he would like to share our camp, whoever he is!"

"Let me run on ahead," urged Jim. "You fellows stay here and watch the packs. We don't want to get too far from Spot's trail, you know."

Dick and Jerry agreed, but first secured a promise from Jim that he would not go more than a quarter of a mile at the most, and that he would be very careful to keep a good distance away from whomever he met until he was sure of his friendship.

Grasping his bow and arrows, Jim started off through the brush at a trot, leaving Jerry and Dick sitting beside the ashes of the late camp-fire.

Chapter IV

INDIAN DAN APPEARS ON THE SCENE—SPOT IS LOCATED

Jerry took advantage of the delay to clean the trout, while Dick sat nearby discussing the events of the day.

"Looks as if we will have to spend the night somewhere close by," he said. "Look where the sun is." Jerry noticed that it was already well down the western sky.

"Must be nearly four o'clock," he remarked. "I'm a little worried about Jim. Do you think he will go far?"

"No, I'm never afraid for Jim so long as he is on his feet and can run. He is the fastest runner around here. What I'm wondering about is who the man can be. I hope Jim sees him, anyway, before he comes back."

"There! I knew there was something wrong," suddenly exclaimed Jerry as he finished washing the trout in the stream. "Dick, we haven't a thing to cook this fish

in tonight, and not a bit of grease even if we had a pan."

"I never thought of that," confessed Dick. "He's a beauty, too. It'll be a shame to have him spoil! Can't we roast him on a stick?"

"No. Fish always cook up soft. He would be sure to fall in the fire. I tried it once with wieners and even they split and fell in, and when I put them on a smaller stick, the stick burned up. Oh, well, we've plenty of other things to eat."

"Wrap him up in your blanket again, anyhow, Jerry. It's about time for Jim to come back, too. Let's go a little way down the stream and then hide on opposite sides of the trail in real Indian fashion and surprise him!"

The boys quickly acted upon this suggestion, each finding a thicket of bushes a few feet from where Jim was sure to pass. The boys had crouched quietly in their hiding places for nearly ten minutes, when they were surprised to hear voices coming from an opposite direction from which Jim was expected.

"Sure rotten luck. I'll never come fish-

ing this way again," someone was saying. The voice sounded strangely familiar to Jerry!

"If I hadn't come along and run on to you fellows, you never would have found your way," an older voice replied.

Jerry and Dick remained motionless as the voices approached.

"Funny how you both happened to fall into the creek that way. Should think fellows your age would know how to keep out of the water anyhow." The voices were coming nearer.

"Look, dad! There's been some people walking along here."

Jerry felt certain he recognized that voice! Using all the caution of an Indian, he raised himself up and peered through the bushes. He was right! Coming along the trail they had so recently left, whom should he see but Albert Sloan, his cousin George, and a heavily built, surly looking man, whom Albert had spoken to as dad.

Carefully Jerry drew himself back into the bushes. If only Dick would see that Jim was not with the party in time to prevent his springing out as he and Jerry had

planned! For Jerry had no desire to meet his late enemies again under such circumstances. Anxiously he watched Dick's bushes, hoping he could signal to him.

"Probably some renegade injuns from the reservation making for the village," Tom Sloan answered, as he examined the tracks his son pointed out. "From the looks of it they're trackin' Old Burntsides, too."

"If that's the case, then we won't have a chance," George put in. "They say that Indians always get the game they go after."

"I wish they would start after you, then," Jerry muttered to himself, as the party drew close.

"Snap! Snap!" Jerry started as two twigs snapped loudly in Dick's cover. Click! Click! Click! Jerry recognized the sound! Anxiously he peered through the bushes and saw every member of the Sloan party with rifles cocked, creeping upon the bush where Dick had broken the twigs.

"Something moving in there, all right," Albert whispered so loudly Jerry could hear him. "Listen!"

"Don't shoot yet. It may be that hoss that made them tracks back a-ways, and

if it is, I sure am wanting him," his father replied.

The three hunters came creeping closer. Dick must have heard them. Thank goodness, he had decided to remain still! Every nerve in Jerry's body was tense, ready to spring out and shout a warning should a single gun be raised! But the Sloans proved to be poor hunters.

"Aw, it was only a jay or a rabbit. Them injuns have chased Burntsides clear out of the woods by now. I'd a heap rather see if we can pick up that cayuse's trail. He seemed to be making for our clearin' and if he does, he's my hoss. I'll put him in with the bunch I'm sellin' next week and whosoever he is will never see him in this state again."

"These tracks may be some of the settlers looking for the old nags we got away with last week," suggested George.

"More likely it's some of their brats out spyin' on our clearin'," growled Sloan. "I'll break their necks if I find 'em! Did you good-for-nothin's see anybody up the creek yesterday?"

"Saw one young fellow, but couldn't tell

who he was. Never saw him before. He came blunderin' around and we started to throw him in, but he ran away."

"Yeh, that's when we fell in," commented George.

Jerry could hardly keep from chuckling to himself, in spite of the seriousness of the situation. However, he was sure now that Dick would not show himself after hearing Sloan's threat. His only anxiety now was that Jim might come upon the party un-awares.

The Sloans had evidently been traveling since early morning and were losing interest in the hunt.

"Come on. We've got a couple of hours' daylight yet. Let's make for the clearin'. I want to see if we can round that hoss up." The elder Sloan did not wait for an answer, but plunged off through the brush toward the hillside on the top of which Spot's trail could plainly be seen.

For a moment Jerry's heart almost stopped beating as he watched the intruders plunge through the brush where they would almost certainly run into Dick! They passed through without mishap, however,

and the two boys kept their places without exchanging even a signal until the last sound of the hunters had died in the distance.

"Huh, bad man," someone grunted only a few yards from Jerry's hiding place.

"Yes, all white men call them bad," came Jim's voice, much to the amazement of Jerry and Dick, who now came crawling cautiously out of their hiding places.

For a moment the two stood in awkward silence as Jim came up the path followed by a tall figure, the like of which Jerry had never seen before!

Bareheaded and with hair hanging in two long black braids over his shoulders, he looked for all the world like the Indian pictures Jerry had seen on the railroad circulars back in Illinois. Even his skin, in spite of its many wrinkles, had a perfect copper hue!

Upon seeing his two friends, Jim stepped proudly forward and held his right hand high in the air before him.

"Braves! Big Chief Dan, known to his many brothers far over the hills as Chief Lone Wolf, is with us! Oh, Great Chief," he continued, turning to Indian Dan, "this is The Thinking One of whom I have spoken.



A TALL FIGURE, THE LIKE OF WHICH JERRY HAD
NEVER SEEN BEFORE

And this," turning from Dick to Jerry, "is—is—er—The Nameless One!"

In spite of the seriousness of the occasion, Jerry and Dick found it hard to keep their faces straight. One look from Jim, however, who was making such a brave effort to impress Old Dan and keep him with them, was enough. With an exaggerated bow, the boys presented themselves to their strange visitor.

"Umh! Umh! Lone Wolf likum good young bucks! Heap smart! Hide like rabbits while Old Wicked Eye and young-white-bucks-with-guns pass. Chief Lone Wolf your friend. Go see now where Wicked Eye go. Come back soon."

Without further ceremony, he glided off through the underbrush and was soon lost to sight.

For a moment, Jerry and Dick were speechless. Then the questions came faster than Jim could answer.

"Where did you find him? What's he doing here? Is it really Indian Dan? Where did you learn to talk like an Indian?"

In self defense, Jim clasped his hands to his ears and refused to listen further until

the boys sat down and permitted him to tell his story.

“Shortly after I left you,” he commenced, “I saw him crossing a clear place about two hundred yards ahead of me. I did not know for sure, but I thought it was Indian Dan. At least he was dressed just like Dan was last Fourth at the village. I ran as fast as I could through the brush. He must have heard me, for I nearly ran past him, when he stepped out of the bushes and held up his right hand like I did just now. I held up my bow and arrows and Old Dan seemed very much amused. Then he asked me in his Indian way why I ran so and I told him I had seen him and wanted to say howdy. After I told him all this, he just stood still and said, ‘Howdy.’ After a while I got him to talk again and he told me he was hunting a bee tree, and that he was tracking Burntsides because he thought the bear was making for a bee tree. I asked him what he was doing so far from the reservation. He looked suspicious then. ‘Too much talk no good,’ he said. ‘You ’lone?’

“I told him you two had sent me ahead to ask him to share our camp and that you

would be very, very happy if he would come back and see you. I don't think he would have come, only he wanted to see for himself who was back here. Well, just as we came close, he pulled me into the brush with him and said, 'Wicked Eye come. Lay still.' I didn't know where you fellows were, but I see you must have heard them coming, too. I don't know how long Old Dan will stay with us."

Jerry then explained how they had happened into the brush by the merest chance.

"The Sloan's homestead must be quite close here. Remember they said they could easily make it before dark?" said Jerry. "I'll bet Spot is making for it, too."

"There's been a nasty rumor for a long time that it is Tom Sloan who has been making away with the settlers' horses and chickens," Jim replied. "Father was on a committee that went to see him about it. Sloan claimed that renegade Indians and Old Burntsides were to blame. They wanted to go and look at his clearing but he said he would shoot anyone who came on his property without his consent. They had a hot argument and before they left

Sloan told them not to send any of their 'brats' around spying or they wouldn't come back. If father knew we were near his clearing, I know he would be worried."

"Do you know where his place is?" Jerry inquired.

"No," Dick answered. "I've never been there myself, but from what father told me, it must be down this very gully. He said there is only one way to get into the cleared pasture land without climbing down steep banks into a stream bed that narrows in between two cliffs. The sides of this one seem to be getting much steeper and closer together."

"Perhaps that's why Sloan felt so sure that Spot would come to his clearing," Jerry replied. "If he gets into this canyon again the poor horse couldn't go anywhere else but to the clearing beyond. Then Sloan would have him sure. What do you think we'd better do?"

Before Dick could answer, Indian Dan reappeared as silently as he had left them.

"Wicked Eye and white bucks-that-carry-guns gone. Maybe trackum horse. Lone

Wolf see trail. Sun soon go. Lone Wolf help white braves make wigwam."

All three of the boys wanted to proceed at once and find out for themselves if Spot were really in the pasture of the Sloans. Jim and Dick especially realized what the loss of the horse would mean to their father. Jerry, too, had a fairly good idea, for even his short acquaintance with the Woodside country had taught him how much had to be sacrificed in order to have animals with which to work.

Until now, the boys had considered their chase after Spot as a mere lark. Now the whole situation changed. Sloan was a bad customer and would stop at nothing. Yet Spot must be recovered at any cost! With fall coming on and the crops to harvest, the Norman boys could not think of losing one of their only two horses! Ordinarily they would have gone home at once and reported the situation to the men folks and let them settle with the horse thieves. But Sloan had let the cat out of the bag when he talked of selling Spot with the rest of his stolen animals early the following week.

Then, too, Sloan had seemed a trifle suspicious of the tracks along the creek and might even now be lying in wait for "spies," as he called them, at the entrance to his clearing. Altogether the problem was a difficult one for the boys, one of whom, at least, had never been in these particular woods before!

Dan did not participate in the conversation. He had taken a sort of fancy to Dick and together they were preparing camp.

"Help cut poles and let's get settled before the sun goes down," Dick called presently to his two companions. Soon the three were busy cutting the long straight alder saplings that grew so thickly along the stream bed. It was tedious work and took considerable time for each of the boys to gather four sticks, as the alder had to be over seven feet in length to suit Old Dan, which meant that nearly two and a half inches of wood had to be cut through with a pocket knife. Before they were finished, each one had a bright red blood blister between the thumb and finger on his right hand.

Dan laid the poles in a parallel pile and deftly tied the smaller ends together with a

loose loop made of some sort of vine from the hillside. Quickly the poles were erected, one large one in the center and ten, grouped in Dan's loop at the top, spread out so that the thick ends formed a circle, standing about a foot and a half apart.

By the time Dan had the poles set, Dick had untied Jerry's pack, and had the large blanket spread out on the ground. Dan tied the twelfth pole along one side of this blanket and then draped it over the other ten. The blanket was not long enough to reach entirely around at the bottom, but when the boys got inside, they found the shelter practically wind-proof and very comfortable.

Since Old Dan joined them, the boys had felt a sense of security and safety they had not known the night before. There was something about his actions, his familiarity with the trees and vines, the ease with which he erected the tepee shelter, that made the boys feel that the woods were really quite the place to live in after all. During the entire time required to erect the tepee, Dan had said nothing beyond giving a few guttural directions to Dick.

The fate of Spot continued to be the center of interest. Old Dan could not help but notice the worried looks on his companions' faces as they discussed the serious business before them. Even if they left for home early next morning, they could not be sure that Spot was held by Sloan. Whatever they did, this point must be settled first. They did not know how far they had come, but Jerry figured from the time they had started that they must be at least eight miles from the camp by the road.

"No," he concluded, "there is only one thing for us to do. We must locate Spot in the morning and get him out of the Sloan's clearing at all costs. It would take us all day tomorrow to go home, then another day for the men to come back here, and by that time Sloan could have the horses far away down the valley."

Completely tired out by their strenuous day, the boys finally threw themselves down on the remaining blanket for a few moments' rest before making the evening fire. They had had only a cold lunch at noon and were ravenously hungry. Even the thought of again eating cold canned meat without

bread or coffee did not dampen their eagerness for the evening meal.

Jim was for opening their last can of corned beef and eating at once.

"Let's look at the fish, anyway," Dick complained; "and why did we bring flour and coffee and onions and potatoes, anyway? Guess I won't be the Thinking One any more. Anyone should have thought of bringing something to cook in!"

Poor Dick was the picture of dejection with his tousled sandy hair, falling in a confused heap, his freckled face smeared with dirt and many kinds of stains from his long trip through the woods. Jerry was little better. His overalls had been torn in several places and his face, though his skin was fair and he had no freckles, was as dirty and streaked as that of his younger partner. His hair, ordinarily a deep brown, had been clipped short before leaving his old home, causing his slouch hat to fit loosely and fall almost to his ears. Jim was the first to go to the stream and wash his face and hands. This done, he presented a rather neat appearance in his heavy blue woolen shirt and close fitting cap.

All three were extremely interested in watching every movement of Indian Dan. They knew it was time to start a fire, but each one was a bit timid at trying it for they had learned the night before that it was not an easy matter to start a fire without paper or dry wood. Jerry looked about for an old snag for bark such as they had found the night before, but everything seemed to be green and fresh along the stream.

Dan, although he said nothing, seemed to be perfectly aware of what was going on in the boys' minds. At least it seemed that way, for he deliberately waited until Jerry and Dick had wasted nearly all of their matches before he took a hand at fire-making himself. With incredible quickness he gathered large handfuls of dried grass and small twigs within a dozen feet of the places where the boys had searched in vain for anything at all that was dry enough to light! They soon discovered why they had not succeeded. The high water of the day before, while it had thoroughly soaked whatever dry material might have been found on the ground, had deposited numerous little tufts of grass, dead water-weeds and

small twigs high up on the willow bushes. The light breeze and hot sun of the day had thoroughly dried these little clusters and Dan had no difficulty in gathering great handfuls which flamed up brightly the moment the match was applied. Soon larger and larger sticks were placed on the blaze until the cheerful little fire no longer required the help of the finer grass and twigs.

Jerry had placed the potatoes, fish, flour and bacon in the center of the blanket and was mournfully selecting the can of corned beef, which he announced would be all they could have for supper, when he became conscious of Dan's presence by his side.

"Eatum!" Dan pointed out the little pile of provisions in the center of the blanket.

"I wish we could, but they must be cooked and we brought nothing with us," Jerry answered.

"Lone Wolf fixum. Travel far with moon tonight. Eat big." It was evident that the Indian wanted no help. It was also very evident from his hungry looks that he had been traveling on short rations. Jerry wondered what he would have eaten if

he had not met them. Little did Jerry know the Indian! He could not understand, for instance, the natural instinct for food that prompted Old Dan to hide his own dried fish and corn meal when he sensed the possibility of obtaining food from the boys. Perhaps Jerry had in mind the Fourth of July affair at the village which Jim had related. But this was a case of Indian pride about which Jerry was to learn much later.

The tired boys were willing enough to rest while Lone Wolf worked miracles with the food. Jerry took in every detail, for here indeed was a real lesson!

The entire supply of potatoes, six nice large ones, were buried in the hot ashes on the edge of the fire, Dan being particular to see that live coals and fire were separated from them by at least one layer of dirt or dead ashes. This attended to, he walked to the stream, wandering along its bed for nearly ten minutes. At length he returned with two rather large flat rocks. One of them he placed in the fire. Without a word of explanation, he then deliberately reached over and took Jerry's felt hat from his head. Again he went to the stream, this time re-

turning with the hat brimming full of water. Then, using the remaining stone much as Jerry had seen his mother use the bread-board at home, the old Indian mixed flour and water together, occasionally adding a pinch of salt, until he had fully a dozen little flat cakes laid out on the edge of the blanket.

"Wonder if he's going to eat them raw," Jerry whispered to Dick, who was sitting next to him.

"The way I feel, I could even eat the stone," Dick replied. "Look! He's going to do something with the fish, too."

"It looks to me as though he was making a mud pie," said Jerry, for the Indian was scooping up a quantity of damp clayish mud from the edge of the stream.

Then came the real surprise of the evening. Dan deliberately placed Jim's fine trout in the center of the large mud pie, working the mud into a compact roll, the fish in the center completely covered with mud on all sides. The Indian worked so quickly and with such skill that the boys almost forgot their intense hunger. With the aid of two short sticks, Dan pulled the

flat rock, which had become extremely hot in the fire, to one side and commenced laying the flour and water cakes upon it. In the small opening where the stone had been, he placed the mud roll containing the fish.

Four cakes were placed on the heated stone at one time, but even what little space was left had its use, for Dan soon cut some long strips of bacon which he laid between the frying cakes. Soon the meal was ready. And such a meal! Large mealy potatoes baked to a turn came from the ashes. Jerry with his long bladed knife made a slit in each one just long enough to hold a crisp piece of bacon.

The thin flour and water cakes, which ordinarily would have been hard and dry, had fried to a light brown and had a wonderful flavor (at least so the hungry boys thought) from the bacon grease in which they had fried.

But the crowning dish of all proved to be Jim's trout. It seemed that Old Dan knew exactly when to rake it from the coals and lay it on a little pile of green ferns in the center of the blanket-tablecloth. Much to the boys' delight, the hard-baked mud fell

cleanly away from the fish, taking the skin only with it, so that Dan soon had the baked mud cleaned away, leaving the delicious pink-white meat of the trout steaming from its platter of ferns!

It is hard to say who ate the most—Old Chief Lone Wolf or the three boys combined. Certain it is that all fell to the meal as though it were the first time they had eaten for days. Jerry started to use his knife for a spoon, but soon gave it up and joined the others in using his fingers exclusively.

“Hands were made before knives, anyway,” Dick laughed, as he reached for his third flour and water cake.

Darkness came rapidly after the sun had once gone down beyond the crest of the western hill. More wood was placed on the fire, and the little party, having finished the meal, settled down for the evening. Spot and the plans for the next day again occupied their entire attention and plan after plan was suggested and thoroughly discussed.

Old Dan had nothing whatever to say, but sat back in the tepee, perfectly straight

and still with never a sign that he understood or even heard what was being said. So the boys talked on as though they were alone in the camp. But soon the heavy meal and warm glow of the camp fire caused a drowsiness to come over them which they found harder and harder to shake off.

Jerry, in fact, was nodding continually and was about to suggest that they lie down for the night, when Dan shook himself and stalked out of the blanket tepee.

"Moon come. Lone Wolf go. One more moon be reservation. White brothers heap good. Sun come. Be rabbit with Wicked Eye! Maybe fox! When moon big once more, Lone Wolf bring brothers. Come spear fish—see white brothers."

The boys scrambled to their feet hastily and Jerry started to thank Dan for his great help. But the old Indian had spoken all he had to say and strode off down the creek without a word further and without even a glance toward his three late companions.

"Isn't he a queer old fellow?" said Dick, when he was certain he could not be overheard. "Where do you suppose he is going now?"

"I think he has left the reservation without permission," Jim suggested, "for he seemed very anxious to know who was back here with me. I think he's going back toward the reservation now."

"Well, I learned more from him tonight than I would have learned in months," was Jerry's thought. "I know I would never feel uneasy with him around."

But Dan was gone, and the boys were too tired and sleepy even to keep the fire going longer. Spreading the blanket on the ground within the tepee, all three curled up on one-half of it, and covered themselves with the other.

Not one of the boys had rested more than three hours the night before, and now at the close of the exciting day, they slept like weary soldiers after a long forced march. And it was well they did, as the strenuous events of the morrow proved.

Chapter V

JERRY WINS A DESPERATE FIGHT AND BECOMES GREAT CHIEF BRAVE HEART

Jerry had no way of knowing the time of night when he finally woke from his first long sleep. He felt rested and fresh, however, and thought it must be well toward morning. He was trying to decide whether or not he should wake his companions when he discovered that they, too, were thinking the same thing.

"You awake, Jerry?" asked Dick.

"Yes—just woke up. Wonder what time it is," Jerry replied. "How did you sleep?"

"Fine. Never slept better in my life. Jim's awake, too. Jim!"

The latter was hardest of the three to arouse. It seemed to him that it could not be much past midnight, for it was even darker than when they lay down.

"That's because the moon is down," Dick explained, "which is a sure sign that morning must be nearly here."

Once completely aroused from their deep sleep, they realized the importance of the day ahead of them. At Jerry's suggestion, they took a thorough wash in the cool water of the stream and did their best to repeat Old Dan's performance of the night before. They were greatly hindered by the darkness, however, and soon decided to open the can of meat and not try cooking until they had more time and less important things to think about.

"I believe we had better hide our blanket rolls here," Dick suggested, when they had finished breakfast. "We all know this place well and if we should get separated during the day, we will meet here."

The idea was a good one and soon the blankets, containing what was left of the food, were rolled in two packs and carefully hidden in the bushes.

"Let's not try to follow Spot's tracks," Jim advised. "If Sloan's clearing really is near here, it must be right down this stream. I'm in favor of getting into it before daylight if we can."

Jerry and Dick agreed and soon the party was making its way slowly through the

underbrush, following the banks of the stream as their guide.

The trip the day before had been hard, but this early morning struggle through the bushes along the stream was the hardest test the boys had so far encountered. First, they would slip in some water hole, badly scratching their shins and knees on the sticks and roots as they fell through; or they would walk too close behind one another, ignorant of their mistake until some switch, bent taut by the one ahead, would whip back and strike with a nasty cut about the face and neck. Times without number Jerry lost his wide felt hat and had to hunt for it in the darkness until his comrades would be yards ahead of him. Rushing to catch up, he would often trip over bushes that a walker could easily avoid and plunge headlong into patches of nettles and sticky long grasses. Altogether, the three were nearly desperate when Jim, who had taken the lead, called a halt.

“Let’s take a chance and walk along the ridge. We can make much better time and wait until daylight to go through the narrow part of this canyon. It’s awful.”

"I didn't think there was so much brush in all the world," panted Jerry.

"And I've lost my hat and most of the skin on my face and shins," complained Dick. "I think Jim is right, only for goodness' sake let's rest awhile."

When they finally made for the ridge they were familiar with, all were completely surprised to find almost sheer walls in place of the slope they had found before.

"This must be the entrance to the clearing all right," said Jim, after they had struggled along the wall far enough to be sure that it ran for considerable distance. "No use trying to scale this. We'll have to make our way through the brush the best we can."

Not a word of complaint came from the youthful trailers as this decision was reached. Jerry wondered at the perseverance and determination of his friends, but already he was beginning to feel the spirit of the homesteaders, the spirit of love and devotion to home and parents that would have carried the boys to any extremity, once the happiness or the rights of the little family was endangered. To lose Spot was a real ca-

lamity and no one knew it better than Jim and Dick! Jerry resolved then and there, as his two companions insisted on plunging once more through the darkness into the punishing underbrush, that he would not let them outdo him either in courage or willingness. Spot would be found and returned safely to the Norman homestead. Of that much he was certain!

There had never been a quarrel among the Woodside Roads settlers until the evil spirit of the Sloan family was felt. No one knew exactly where the Sloans came from, but it was pretty well understood that they had shifted about, jumping claims here and there, moving about on the edge of the Indian reservation and causing trouble wherever they went.

Their sudden appearance here had been accompanied by mysterious losses of farm stock generally, mostly horses and calves. At first, the older farmers could hardly believe that a fellow settler would deliberately steal. But gradually the rumor spread that Tom Sloan made frequent long trips out of the country, driving horses and cattle before him. But so far, no one had ac-

tually seen stolen animals in his possession, and nothing had been done. But neither had any trace been found of the "lost" animals.

It was still dark when the badly tattered, much scratched trio suddenly came upon a trail. With a genuine sigh of relief, they took advantage of their discovery and made haste to cover as much ground as possible before daylight. They had covered nearly a mile when Jim halted so suddenly that Dick ran squarely into him, exclaiming loudly as he did so.

"Hello—what's that?" came a voice in the darkness.

"I don't hear nothing," someone answered.

"I tell you somebody's on this here trail. They're aimin' to git into our pasture afore daylight."

It was the gruff voice of Tom Sloan. Breathlessly the boys fell to their hands and knees and crawled back along the trail as fast as they could.

"Them was their tracks we saw down below," they could hear Sloan saying. "Both o' you would 'a' gone clear on to the house last night. I knowed better. If it

wasn't for me, you fellows would be in jail all your worthless lives. Keep your mouths shut now and watch close. I tell you I heard something."

The boys crawled rapidly in the opposite direction until they were certain they were out of hearing distance. For several minutes they listened carefully to make certain they were not followed.

"Let's get out of ear-shot and hide till daylight," whispered Jerry. "They made camp on the trail last night to make sure no one came in. Sloan must have quite a bunch of horses all right. He seems to be worried."

"He'll be certain to try and get out of the country with 'em now," said Dick, "for he knows someone is on his trail."

Although the forced rest was sorely needed, the boys grew extremely impatient at the delay. Dick was for attempting to steal past the sleeping party at once, but the calmer judgment of Jim and Jerry withheld him.

Before long the boys once more witnessed the gray light of morning in the forest country. They knew from their experience the

day before that sun rays would soon follow the first signs of light, and all were tense with interest as the first faint outlines of the country were revealed.

True to Jim's prediction, they found themselves in the bottom of a narrow gulch, the sides of which were steep and barren. Through the trees ahead they could faintly see the outlines of a clearing. Beyond this they could not see, but Jim said it must be the river, as his father had described Sloan's clearing as a sort of Y formed by high walls on the sides and cut off in front by the Woodgulch River. It was understood that Sloan had several secret trails leading to the river out of which he could take his horses without fear of detection.

As more of the country could be seen, the boys found they were within one hundred yards of the cleared pasture. A heavy log barn or house stood directly in the center, but there seemed to be no one living in it, as the tall grass which grew so luxuriantly over the pasture continued right up to the very door of the building.

"The Sloan party are evidently going to have breakfast," Jerry observed, as he

pointed out a thin streak of smoke that came up through the trees. "This ought to be our chance to get past them."

"I think we ought to separate," was Dick's advice. "If we travel together, we are certain to make a lot of noise. Let's go one at a time and meet out in the clearing."

Without further words, Jim pointed out a lone cedar snag near the edge of the pasture and declared that he would be the first to make it.

"After I have been gone about twenty minutes, one of you start; then the last one can come," he whispered, as he made down the trail.

Dick and Jerry sat silently in their hiding place, straining their ears for any sound that might suggest danger to Jim. Next Dick slipped off through the brush with a cheerful "See you soon, Jerry" and made for the lone cedar.

Then came Jerry's turn. Creeping along through the bushes, he made as wide a detour as possible when he came near the enemies' camp. He found Dick and Jim

lying flat in the tall grass near the snag, anxiously awaiting him.

As soon as he was settled, Jim pointed out a herd of ten or fifteen horses grazing quietly on the far side of the pasture. In the very center of the bunch was Spot!—grazing leisurely away, wholly unconscious of the anxiety and danger he was causing.

“If we could only get a rope and crawl among those horses!” Dick exclaimed.

“Then we would be lost,” his brother replied. “We must get back through the gully along that trail, and the Sloans are there.”

For nearly half an hour the boys seemed at their wit's end. Plan after plan was discussed, but nothing seemed to come of any of them. Several times they decided to wait for the Sloans to leave, but each time Jerry pointed out that if they did, they would probably take the horses with them as there was no one living in the house and since they had lain at the entrance trail all night, it was plain they would not leave the horses alone. The situation was really bad. Here they had found Spot and had come into the

very pasture unharmed, but could do nothing more! It began to look even as though they would have to lie there and see Spot taken away before their very eyes! For presently Sloan, followed by Albert and George, came into the clearing.

Jerry swore he had never seen anyone so mean looking in all his life as Tom Sloan. His clothes bore evidence of being slept in many nights; a stubble beard and shaggy mustache completely hid most of his face. George and Albert seemed to be at least sixteen years old. Jerry knew from past experiences what ugly customers they were. But he also knew they were not so hard to handle as they seemed!

The party appeared to be coming straight for the cedar tree! So close, in fact, that the boys retreated several paces through the grass for safety. Sloan's eyes seemed to flash about everywhere. Once it seemed certain that he had discovered the boys, for he looked directly at the place where they were hiding, and deliberately stood still for nearly a minute!

"Couldn't have seen us. But lie awful

quiet," cautioned Dick. They could now hear what the Sloans were saying.

"Now, you young fools have been a-want-in' to get to a town again, let's see how fast you can git that bunch o' horses caught up. Git your saddle 'uns first. I'm a-goin' to try that spotted one myself. Bring him in right off."

The situation was becoming critical, but still no opportunity seemed to present itself. The boys twisted nervously in their hiding place. Sloan himself made for the low log house. Jerry observed it closely. He noticed the heavy log door that swung outward and the one small square window in the side nearest them. This, too, had been equipped with a heavy shutter, which dangled loosely in the light morning breeze. Suddenly Jerry reached over and patted Jim on the shoulder.

"I've got it!" he exclaimed enthusiastically. "Here's our only chance, and we can do it, too!"

Quick as a flash Jerry had conceived a great plan. As he laid it before the boys, giving each one his particular work, it was

easy to see why Jerry had been the leader of the boys in his old home town! Now he thrilled with the thought that for once he could be the leader of a *real* game, the most exciting one he had ever played!

"Jim, Dick says you're the fastest runner in the country here. You make off for the corner over there. When Albert and George get a rope on Spot, you get right up and holler at them. Do anything so they will chase you. Then lead 'em off through the trail and try your level best to lose 'em in the woods!

"Dick, you take the bow and arrows. There's four of them. Sneak out and get among the horses. Get hold of Spot's rope. If you do, shoot arrows at four of the other horses and get them to run away. Then you make for the trail. We'll meet you at last night's camp."

"But what will we do with Sloan himself?" protested Jim and Dick.

"Leave him to me."

Something in Jerry's eyes told his two companions that all was not going to be well with Mr. Sloan. Also they felt sure that Jerry would come out somehow. But both

realized that he had chosen far the hardest part of the fight for himself.

After the long wait and the hopeless feeling that they could do nothing, the boys took to Jerry's plan with a will. Of course, it was dangerous. But it was action, and anything was better than lying there and seeing Spot led away forever!

"Get your places, and then don't do a thing till I whistle," Jerry ordered as the boys slipped off through the grass. "Don't let them see you first or everything will be lost."

For a moment Jerry lay perfectly quiet. Then he crawled cautiously toward the house. Sloan was sitting on a stump about fifty yards in front of Jerry's goal, out toward the horses.

Spot must have sensed his danger. Several times to Jerry's great satisfaction, he flung his heels in the air and made off around the clearing.

Well did he know how precious these minutes were! While Sloan haw-hawed at the boys from his stump, shouting directions in his coarse language, Jerry worked. Sneaking to the door of the cabin he peered within.

At first he could see nothing, for his eyes were still accustomed to the sun's rays.

Gradually he made out the interior. The ground floor for fully six inches deep was covered with litter from horses.

"He packs 'em in here and locks the door whenever he thinks there are spies about," thought Jerry to himself. This, he reasoned, accounted for the Sloan's not occupying the house. One lone piece of furniture, which might have been a table at one time, stood on the side of the room beneath the little window.

"I'll take a chance," he concluded.

Apparently satisfied with his inspection, he made his way around to the one window, which, as luck would have it, was on the side away from Sloan and the horses. As he had noticed before, the window had a coarse board shutter which flapped loosely with every puff of wind. Here again Jerry measured with his eye the distance from the window to the ground.

"About six feet," he figured as he again made his way to the pile of brush and old logs in the rear.

Presently he re-appeared below the win-

dow with two sturdy poles each over six feet in length. With one of these he pushed the shutter tight and braced it. Satisfied with his experiment, he lowered the pole and made sure that the shutter was again free to flap in the breeze.

“Now for the door,” he said, as he cautiously worked his way around the corner of the house. Here great caution was necessary, for the door was in plain sight of every one.

Creeping stealthily up through the tall grass, he examined every detail. He found it to be made entirely of medium sized logs held together at the top and bottom by broad strips of split logs fully three inches thick and nearly a foot wide. The hinges were crude affairs, but very strong, and could only be seen from the outside.

Having finished his examination of the door, he again peered within the room. This time he could have sworn he saw something moving in the far corner! But he could not be sure. Crawling around to the far side, he found, much to his satisfaction, that no opening of any kind had been cut through the solid logs.

Nothing more remaining to be done, Jerry turned his attention to the horse thieves. He was none too soon!

"Bring 'em in. Let's get out o' here. I'll tame that cayuse," Sloan was bellowing across the field.

Albert had Spot securely held with a coarse rope halter, while George led five of the other horses by long ropes tied about their necks.

Jerry scanned the grass. Not a sign of Dick or Jim could he see. The great moment had come. His heart seemed to fill his entire chest and still to demand more space! Twice he put his fingers to his lips to sound the signal. Twice he lowered them and crept closer to Sloan's stump. It would never do. Sloan must be taken care of before Dick and Jim exposed their presence.

Nervously Jerry retraced his course and hurried to the brush pile in the rear of the cabin. Grasping the longest switch he could find, he once more made for the stump. The horses were coming closer and were now almost halfway to the stump.

"How Dick and Jim must feel!" thought Jerry.

Yard after yard he covered as rapidly as he could. Closer and closer he came to the stump. Weaker and wobbly, his ankles and knees barely held him up. He wondered if his legs would become stronger. His stomach felt empty and terribly weak. He hurried on. Sloan would surely hear his pounding heart now! He increased his speed. Closer and closer came the stump. He could see the color of Sloan's hair. There were burrs and twigs matted in it!

Jerry thought he had never seen a larger man in his entire life! After all, maybe he should have told Jim and Dick more of his plan. But Spot was coming closer. It was now or never!

With one frenzied rush, in which all the terror his imagination could put in him came out, Jerry lunged toward the stump. Brandishing his switch above his head he made for Sloan!

"There, you big thief, take that! And that! And that!" Jerry hardly knew what he was doing. With three wild swings, he lashed his switch about the man's face, each blow finding its mark! For a moment Sloan was completely taken by surprise. Then, with a bellow of rage, he lunged after Jerry.

"Do your part, Jim—Dick. I'm whistling—I'm whistling!" screamed Jerry, as he fled before the man. Poor Jerry could easier fly than whistle now! Twice he tripped in the grass as he rushed toward the cabin. His breath was already coming in quick, little jerks.

"I'll git ye and I'll break every bone in your carcass, you varmint!" yelled Sloan as he bore down.

But the first panic was over. Jerry's plan was working! It would soon be over now! And he was running! Could he beat Sloan? He began to reason again, to feel sure of himself. He must keep Sloan busy!

He raced on in a wide circle. The field seemed to be empty save for himself and the cursing man behind. Jerry was tiring fast. Long grass wrapped about his legs and seemed to hold him tight! Would Sloan never tire? He was coming closer! Once more Jerry tripped and fell headlong. He scrambled up none too soon, for Sloan was right behind him. A sharp pain in the left side caught Jerry! If he could only stop—just a moment! He must stop. His wind was gone!

He could almost feel hot breath on the back of his neck. If he could only get out of the grass! He made for the cabin now, his only hope. He must get there somehow. A trick he learned at school flashed through his whirling brain. He would try it. He must try something. With a last great effort, he spurted on. Yes, Sloan was back of him! Jerry slowed down. With a grunt of rage, Sloan speeded up. As he did so, Jerry fell limply before him. The trick worked. Sloan stumbled heavily and went headlong into the grass. Quickly Jerry gathered himself up and made once more for the cabin. The moment's rest had done its part. He could keep on a little farther.

Sloan was saving his breath now. He rushed after the boy in silent, deadly rage. With one final spurt, Jerry rushed through the open door of the log cabin. Sloan was scarcely twenty feet behind.

"Now I got ye—now I got ye," he roared.

Desperately Jerry made for the old table under the window. It was well for him that he had fixed the location in his mind! He could see nothing in the dark room. Madly he scrambled up, grasping the window edge



SLOAN STUMBLED HEAVILY AND WENT HEADLONG
INTO THE GRASS

with his hands. With a last heroic effort, he pulled himself up and fell through to the ground outside! Partly stunned and bleeding, Jerry never hesitated. With a quickness that terror only can give, he grabbed the pole he had left and slammed the shutter tight. One moment more and the pole was propped against it.

A dozen leaps and he was at the front door. Slam! The second log was jammed in place. His strength was all but gone. He could hear Sloan inside, raging and pounding about. Reeling with exhaustion, he made for the log pile for more props for the window and door, but the light faded from before his eyes and he sank limply to the cool grass.

Far away in the woods another chase was fast coming to an end. When Jim saw Jerry's mad rush toward Sloan, he knew he could lie still no longer. Fortune had been with him, for the two cousins were scarcely a dozen feet away when he sprang from the grass. Without waiting for the expected whistle from Jerry, he rushed among the horses, causing them to rear up and plunge

about so viciously that Jerry and his pursuer were completely ignored in the confusion. At first Albert and George tried to hold their animals, but when they saw that their antagonist was a mere slip of a boy, they dropped their ropes and rushed for him. Jim's reputation as a runner was well earned. With light springing steps, he easily led the way toward the gap, always just far enough ahead to keep his pursuers on his trail. Twice before leaving the pasture he deliberately fell and rolled in the grass, springing up and dashing off when the cousins approached. Using all the cleverness and skill he could master, he kept up the game of "Fox and Hounds" until they were well down the trail and out into the open canyon. Long before reaching the camp site of the night before, he swung off to the right, directly away from the ridge they had previously followed. Before long the chase settled down to a scramble through the underbrush, and it required all of Jim's skill to keep the cousins after him. Finally he resorted to taunts and jeers, once even letting Albert Sloan get close enough behind him to receive a stinging blow from a young

sapling that he had bent over for the occasion.

At length Jim decided he had kept up the chase long enough. With rapid strides he made through the forest at a pace that soon had his pursuers hopelessly lost in the rear. After much manoeuvring, he reached the camp site of the night before. Here he found both blanket packs gone and a crude message scratched into the black smut on the flat rock!

"On to road camp. Come. Dick."

To his great joy he found Spot's fresh tracks. Quickly scratching his name below Dick's, in case Jerry was still behind, he made off to join his comrades. The sun was well along on its afternoon journey when Jim arrived. No one was in sight, although he felt he was not alone. He stood peering about for perhaps five minutes when he heard the cautious voice of Dick coming from a thicket of brush.

"You alone, Jim? No one following you?"

"Yes, I'm alone. Where's Jerry? Where's Spot?"

"Spot's here. Got him hidden. Where's Jerry?"

"Don't know. Haven't seen him."

Between anxious glances up the trail for some sight of Jerry, Jim related his story in detail. Then both boys decided to hasten back to see if they could find any trace of their brave companion, when they were forced to cover by a cracking of brush as someone approached.

"It's Jerry!" cried Dick and Jim in one breath as they abandoned all caution and sprang forward to welcome the hero.

Jerry was a sight to behold! His precious hat was gone. Large patches of dried blood streaked his face and shirt, for his nose had bled violently after his fall from the window of the house. His legs were a bit shaky but his face was wreathed in smiles as he greeted his friends.

"Spot all right?" were his first words as he sank heavily to the ground. "Tell me how you did it."

"You mean, tell us how *you* did it," exclaimed the happy boys.

"I guess I won't just now—I'm—I'm—kinder tired," poor Jerry broke down for the moment exhausted, while Dick and Jim,

thoroughly alarmed, made a bed of the blankets and placed him upon them to rest.

"He's had a terrible time, I'll bet," said Jim. "Maybe Old Sloan's still after us—better keep a good watch."

Jerry smiled weakly in spite of his throbbing head.

"No danger. We could—we could—smell—" and then he sank off into a fitful sleep, while Dick bathed his head with cool water brought by capfuls from the stream. At length his breathing became more even.

"He will soon be himself again," said Dick fanning the flies and wood gnats from the sleeper's face.

Once more the sun was fading in the west, painting the early Fall skies a beautiful silvery scarlet. The cool evening breezes were swaying the hemlocks and cedars when Jerry opened wide his eyes and inquired where he was. Gradually he became refreshed and after repeated urging, entered into his story.

"I must have fainted after I propped the door, for I knew nothing until I was finally aroused by Old Sloan pounding away within. It's a good thing I came to when I did,



EACH TAKING HIS TURN AT LEADING AND RIDING SPOT

for the door was open nearly two inches. A little more and he would have been free. I think, though, what really brought me to was the animals inside the house."

"Animals!" exclaimed Jim and Dick.

Jerry broke into a broad grin and continued:

"Anyhow I slammed the door shut again mighty quick and did a good job of propping this time. Nothing happened on the way here. I read your note on the stone and rubbed it off. I got awful tired coming here and had a terrible headache."

"But are you sure Old Sloan isn't following you?" insisted Dick.

Again Jerry laughed.

"We certainly would smell him in plenty of time if he was, for the animals in the old house were skunks!"

Both boys rolled on the ground completely doubled up with laughter as they pictured the savage Tom Sloan locked in the log house with a family of skunks. Jerry felt so much better that he finally threatened to drag them both down to the creek and duck them if they didn't quiet down and get ready for the journey to the Homestead.

The trip home was made in a slow, leisurely manner, each one taking his turn at leading and riding Spot.

Needless to say the greeting they received upon reaching home was as tender and joyous as their adventure had been strenuous. They found Mr. and Mrs. Norman as well as the Steward family all together at Jerry's new home, where a searching party was being organized.

Time after time they repeated their stories to the eager group. Dick insisted to the last that his part had been too easy to mention and joined Jim in enthusiastic praise of Jerry's work.

Jerry never remembered when he had been so happy before. Tired and worn out as he was, he insisted on examining as much of his new home as he could, expressing to everyone how wonderful it all was to think of actually living in the woods forever. And though the effects of their first wild adventure were still fresh upon them, the young woodsmen began laying plans for the future! Plans in which Indian Dan, bows and arrows, Old Burntsides—yes, even Tom Sloan, the cousins and all—figured.

At last the time for parting came. The boys had known each other scarcely three days, yet there was a comradeship between them that only the true and faithful can know. After affectionate good-byes had been said, Jim stepped forward.

“The Thinking One and The Great Hunter are no longer chiefs,” he said, looking very solemn and grave. “They welcome their great chief, Brave Heart. From now on he will lead the tribe!”

And so it was that Jerry came to be the first leader of the Woodside Tribe of Indian Braves.

THE END

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